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ABSTRACT

Noting that reading well is at the heart of all learning, this guide suggests reading activities that will prevent a decline in children's reading skills over winter vacation, and the guide encourages parents to spend time with their children through these activities. The guide provides links to the following suggested reading lists: the American Library Association Resources for Parents, Teens, and Kids; Caldecott Medal Home Page; Children's Book Council; Newbery Medal Home Page; New York Public Library: On Lion for Kids!; Other Children's Literature Awards; Parents' Choice; Reach Out and Read; Smithsonian Magazine's Notable Books for Children, 2001; and the Children's Literature Web Guide. In addition, this guide provides guidelines for parents for reading well together. Bookmarks are provided as an activity for parents and children to print out and decorate. (PM)

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Home for the Holidays...

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Reading Together

The children in your family will probably be in and around the home during their winter vacation from school. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and the U.S. Department of Education encourage you to take the time to read together during this holiday season.

Taking part in reading activities will help to prevent fall-off in children's reading skills over the winter vacation while giving you the opportunity to spend time together. Book lists located on the Web suggest a variety of materials you can read together. Links to some of those suggested reading lists are included here.

Because reading well is at the heart of all learning, you will want to listen carefully when you read with the children in your family to understand how well they are learning to read. Statistics released earlier this year tell us that approximately 40 percent of all fourth graders in the United States can't read and understand a simple paragraph from a children's book. Reading with children is an easy way to involve yourself in their education, and research on reading skills shows that children whose families spend time discussing, explaining and asking questions know more words than other children. Here are several suggestions regarding ways to make sure you are reading well together.

In many cultures, the holiday season is a time for giving. Some of the best gifts are those that are hand-made. Children who are interested in giving bookmarks to friends or family may use the designs provided for creating bookmarks at home. You may also want to consider giving reading materials to your own children or donating books to organizations serving children from disadvantaged backgrounds, whose homes may not be filled with magazines, newspapers and books. School and other libraries serving students from disadvantaged backgrounds may also appreciate the gift of new or used children's books during the holiday season and throughout the year.

Fill your holiday season with opportunities for learning by reading together.

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Secretary Paige Reads with Students

http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPA/getImage.cgi?subdir=offices/OPA/photo/images&img=PaigeWinterRead-LG.jpg

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Suggested Reading Lists

Use the links below to find suggestions on books you can read with your child during the holiday season. Some of these links include lists of books related to the holiday season and are noted with a snowflake . Most of these lists include information on books that may be appropriate based upon age and interest. We hope you will consider these suggestions as you sit down to read together.

- **American Library Association Resources for Parents, Teens and Kids**

  http://www.ala.org/parents/index.html

- **Caldecott Medal Home Page**

  http://www.ala.org/alsc/caldecott.html

- **Children's Book Council**

  http://www.cbcbooks.org/html/showcase.html

- **Newbery Medal Home Page**

  http://www.ala.org/alsc/newbery.html

- **New York Public Library: On Lion for Kids!**

  http://www2.nypl.org/home/branch/kids/reading/index.cfm

- **Other Children's Literature Awards**

  http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/awards.html

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- **Parents' Choice**

  http://parents-choice.org/

- **Reach Out and Read**

  http://www.reachoutandread.org/books.html

- **Smithsonian Magazine's Notable Books for Children, 2001**

  http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu/smithsonian/issues01/nov01/book_review.html

- **The Children's Literature Web Guide**

  http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/

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Reading Well Together

- As you read together, stop and ask your children about the pictures in the book and what is happening in the story.
- Read from a variety of children's books, including fairy tales, songs, poetry and information books.
- When reading a book where the print is large, point word by word as you read. This will help your children learn that reading goes from left to right and understand that the words they say are the words they see.
- Read your children's favorite books with them over and over again to build understanding and recognition.
- Read stories with your children that feature rhyming worlds and lines that repeat. Invite your children to join in on these parts. Point word by word as they read along with you.
- Discuss new words. For example, "This big house is called a palace. Who do you think lives in a palace?"
- Listen and watch how your children read and understand written materials. If your children can't listen to a story, avoid printed words or refuse to try sounding out words, you should get extra reading help from your school.

If you would like some additional guidance on helping your children to learn to read well, you may wish to refer to one of the Department of Education publications listed below. These recent publications feature the latest scientific evidence on methods that work to teach children to read well:

- Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read, A Parent Guide, Preschool Through Grade 3. Also available in PDF
- Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read, Kindergarten Through Grade 3, September 2001. Also available in PDF

For other resources on reading try the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's Reading Resources.

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http://www.ed.gov/inits/holidays/bookmarks.html

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Creating Bookmarks at Home

If you are looking for activities for your children during the holiday season, consider making bookmarks together. You and your children can use them or give them to family and friends.

These bookmarks can be printed out on your computer and decorated at home. If you print out two you can glue them together for a front and back image. To create a sturdy bookmark you can put a tongue depressor or some cardboard from a cereal or other box in between the two pieces when you glue them together.

Bookmarks are available in PDF .

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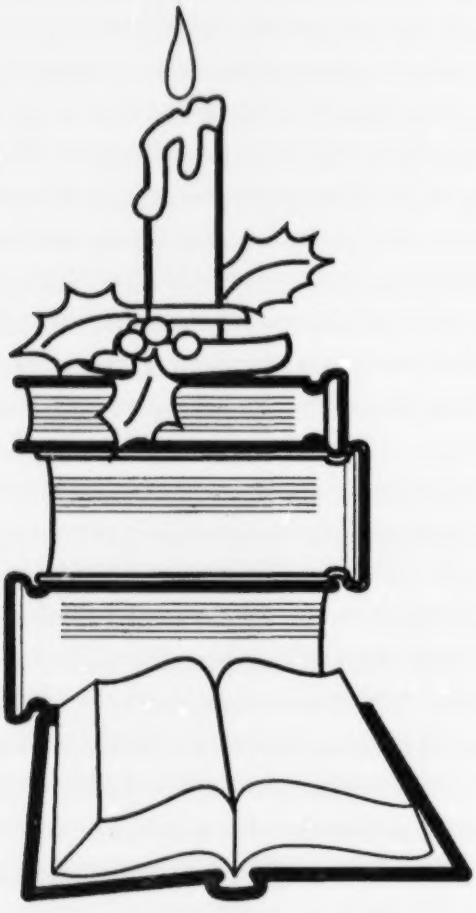

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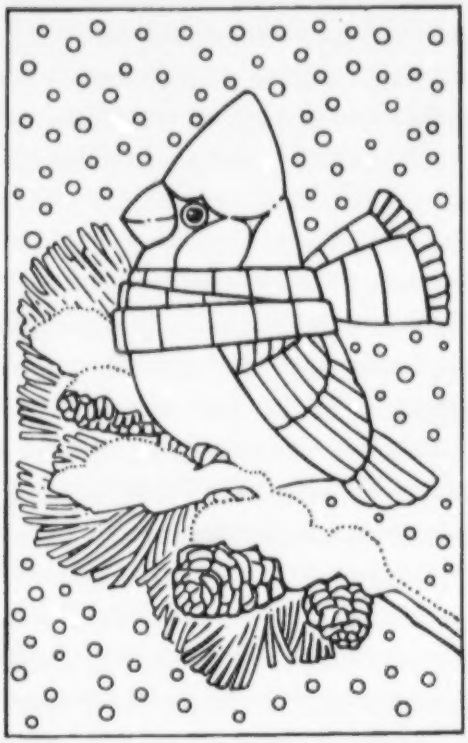

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